

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, April 28, 1992**

2:30 p.m.

Date: 92/04/28

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Dear God, author of all wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, we ask Thy guidance in order that truth and justice may prevail in all our judgments.

Amen.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

MR. SPEAKER: Clover Bar.

MR. GESELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to present a petition on behalf of 46 Albertans who are opposed to Bill 204, the Dangerous Dogs Amendment Act. Their specific opposition is related to the definition of dangerous dogs, and their contention is that it should be on the basis of behaviour rather than specific breed.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

### Bill 316 Medical Profession Amendment Act

MS M. LAING: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave today to introduce Bill 316, Medical Profession Amendment Act.

It would require that a medical practitioner who has reasonable and probable grounds to believe that a colleague is sexually assaulting a patient report those concerns to the college.

[Leave granted; Bill 316 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the annual report for the Public Service Employee Relations Board.

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to file with the Legislative Assembly the March '92 progress report of the nursing Job Enhancement Advisory Committee.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly have been visited today by approximately 200 students and parents and teachers representing the Association of Independent Schools and Colleges in Alberta. They've traveled quite a long distance, many of them from as far away as Medicine Hat and Grande Prairie, to tell, I believe, many of the members who they've been able to meet with this morning and this noon hour about the good results that are being achieved by children in the independent schools of the province. They've also brought us up to date on their very positive initiative, the Choices for Children campaign. Many of them have joined us in both galleries today. They're joined by their president, Mr. Jim Seutter. I'd ask them all to rise and receive a very warm welcome from all members of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore, followed by the Minister of Health and Lesser Slave Lake.

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to introduce to you 26 students from J.H. Picard school, which is a French immersion school located in the beautiful constituency of Edmonton-Avonmore. They are accompanied by their teachers Mr. Daniel Blais and Mrs. Jan Taylor. They are seated in the visitors' gallery, and I would ask that they please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to introduce to you 41 students from J. Percy Page high school, also in the constituency of beautiful Edmonton-Avonmore. They are accompanied by their teachers Mr. Rick Long and Ms Paula Stein. I wouldn't hazard a guess as to where they are seated, but I would ask that they rise and receive a warm welcome from this Assembly.

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, seated in the members' gallery are 23 visitors from Lynnwood school. They are accompanied by their teacher Mrs. Lorraine Overand and by parents and helpers, whose help is so vital to education in this province: Mrs. Irene Stein, Mrs. Kathie Ross, Mrs. Margery Monsma, and Mrs. Arlene Buschkiel. I would ask them to rise and receive a very warm welcome from the members.

MR. SPEAKER: Lesser Slave Lake.

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce two young men who came to see me today - both are actually from Slave Lake - Sean Hill and Brad Reinsch. They're from St. John's school. I'd ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

head: **Oral Question Period  
Economic Development**

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I showed that for every company this government backed with ad hoc help that succeeded, another six that the government backed ended up in failure. It shows that ministers across the way sitting around the cabinet table are frankly lousy at picking winners. Now we know why. Because most often they're helping their political friends. We can also tell if such ad hoc spending is working by how much money comes back to taxpayers. For every tax dollar put at risk under the student loan program, which the minister talked about, the province got back 91 cents. Under the Farm Credit Stability Fund Act they got back 99.4 cents. That's a good record, but contrast that with what the cabinet did: for every tax dollar put at risk by cabinet handouts to business, the government got back 2 cents. That's performance. My question to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade: how can the minister continue to justify this dismal record to the taxpayers of Alberta, who are footing the bill for this government gambling in the private sector?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I did not have the benefit of the New Democratic Party's news release, and I'm delighted that I do have the benefit of it today because the figures that he has recited to this House, as he has done on a consistent basis, are very inaccurate, in fact very untruthful. If one looks at the record as to what they released to the media yesterday, he includes the credit union assistance of some \$563 million, the Principal Group. I can go through a long list of companies whereby we did not involve ourselves because of a business transaction, but we involved ourselves because of our social conscience and our concern for the welfare of those individuals who had invested in those companies. We had no obligation, but again we did so recognizing the importance that they play to the province.

The hon. member also highlights a number of investments that we don't know whether there will be any loss on whatsoever. I indicate to the hon. member again that all this information is highlighted in public accounts. We indicate within our budgetary projections the actual losses that we feel are going to occur. The Provincial Treasurer might wish to supplement my answer because he has the direct responsibility as it relates to public accounts.

It's very misleading for the hon. member to highlight only those areas that he feels will justify his cause. I'm delighted to see now that he does have a recognition that the percentage losses are greater in other areas than what they have been whereby we've been involved with the business community.

**2:40**

MR. MARTIN: To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. No matter how they look at it, they've wasted \$1.6 billion of taxpayers' money, Mr. Speaker. Secondly, when they get behind the closed doors of cabinet, they have almost inevitably lost taxpayers' money, 2 cents on the dollar. I want to ask the minister: why doesn't he come clean? How can he continue to justify this abysmal failure of government doing this behind closed doors?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, we have come clean, unlike the hon. leader of the New Democratic Party, which persists in offering misleading information. I highlighted a number of the areas where he is in error.

I should also indicate to the hon. member that he asked for results. The results are within the economic activity of this province. We see job creation within this province when every other area within North America is experiencing job losses. Mr. Speaker, we want to have a climate that is conducive to business investment so that we can create meaningful jobs for the young people within this province, and it's an area that we're going to continue through with, as was done in our budgetary projections indicating that we're going to have some 15,000 new jobs created within this fiscal year.

MR. MARTIN: If that's as accurate as the Treasurer's previous forecasts, forget it, Mr. Speaker. He's never right.

If you want to talk about job loss, we are facing a recession. The money to Myrias, General Systems, Alberta Terminals: I could go on and on. There are 36 of them. Stop wandering around and answer the question. How can this minister have the nerve to stand in this Assembly and say that this program is working when they get behind closed doors and make the mistakes that they do?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, some months ago, as I indicated yesterday to the Leader of the Official Opposition, we highlighted the areas that we had been involved in, highlighted a number of the successes that we have had. I'm glad that the hon. member at least will deal in a somewhat rational sense whereby he highlighted the thousands of individuals that we supported through the farm credit stability program. We have also highlighted the thousands of small businesses that we have helped with interest shielding. It is a totally inaccurate presentation on behalf of the leader of the New Democratic Party to suggest that those losses have been sustained.

As I indicated to him, we involved ourselves in the larger ones because of our commitment to the social welfare of this province, not because of any business commitment. I should also indicate to him that if he looks at a number of our programs that they've criticized dealing with the export loan guarantee, which has a

success rate greater than 95 percent, that has created thousands of jobs within this province so that we could take advantage of export opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, let me just reinforce what I indicated to the leader yesterday. I'm more than happy to get into a detailed debate as it relates to our own budgetary estimates, as I know the Provincial Treasurer is. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question, Leader of the Opposition, without Edmonton-Kingsway. Let's have the question.

MR. MARTIN: If they want to keep misleading the people, they're going to pay the price, Mr. Speaker. [interjections] The Treasurer is getting excited. He's in charge of losses. I can understand it.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to designate my second question to the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Strathcona.

#### **Bench Insurance Agencies Ltd.**

MR. CHIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Premier. The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has claimed that the government has no responsibility for permitting Bench Insurance to defraud some 350 farmers of more than a million dollars in premiums. This claim has been rendered totally incredible by information which has come to light that one of the victims, John Vandeborn, suspected his policy might be bogus in June of 1991 and asked the Alberta Insurance Council to investigate the possibility of a bogus policy, was then advised by an investigator from the AIC that everything was fine and that he should go ahead and renew his policy. To the Premier: given that the losses suffered by the victims between June of 1991, the date of this request for an investigation, and March of 1992 would have been avoided had the Alberta Insurance Council done a full and proper investigation, how can the government maintain that the regulators share no responsibility in this matter?

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, as Acting Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs I'm more than glad to bring the member's very detailed and complex question to the attention of the minister as soon as he returns.

MR. CHIVERS: Mr. Speaker, I would again go to the Premier. Given the fact that Mr. Vandeborn's information came to light at a meeting which was attended by Consumer and Corporate Affairs administrators, who maintained that responsibility for compliance with the legislation is on the agents and not the Alberta Insurance Council and explained that the Act provides no power for the AIC to monitor these activities, I submit that these explanations and the entire Bench matter show that the council serves no practical purpose. I'd ask the Premier if he intends to dissolve this wasteful and useless body.

MR. MAIN: The member's considerable question deserves a considerable answer, and I will take the matter to the considerable minister.

MR. CHIVERS: We haven't had any considerable answers yet, but there are families that are in urgent need, those families who have lost as a result of claims which are unanswered. The Mortons are about to lose their farm; the Diamonds are living out of their garage. The department has taken the position that refund

of premiums or claims is a political decision made by politicians. Will the Premier tell the Assembly when the government will take responsibility for its regulatory failure and reimburse the victims of the crime?

MR. MAIN: Mr. Speaker, the government shares the concerns of all Albertans with regard to this matter. The minister has spoken to this question several times in the past, and I again will bring the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona's concerns to his attention. I'm sure there will be an answer delivered to the members of this Assembly in due course.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Glengarry, on behalf of the Liberal Party.

### Speaker/Media Incident

MR. DECORE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A serious incident occurred on these premises last Friday. That incident involves the allegation of an assault by certain Alberta citizens. Now a statement denies that assault. The matter which was serious has become even more serious. I believe that the effective operation of this Assembly is at risk. The question is to the Premier: will the Premier canvass the party leaders to get agreement to have this Assembly call upon the Chief Justice of Alberta to investigate this issue? [interjections] It's not a funny matter. This is not funny. [interjections] This is not a joking matter.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Please complete the question.

MR. DECORE: I'm asking for the Premier to call upon the Chief Justice of Alberta to investigate this incident involving the Speaker and certain media personnel and to thereafter provide recommendations to the Assembly for appropriate action.

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that if the hon. member feels strongly – and obviously I take him at face value if he says that he does feel there's a very serious matter – our rules in the Legislature over the many, many years of tradition dealing with matters like this point the way to proceed.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, our rules do not protect all of the people involved in this incident. There are rules that protect the Speaker. There should be rules that protect Alberta citizens. Will the Premier agree to call on the Chief Justice to look at this matter, to tell us what to do with the situation that is now at an impasse?

MR. GETTY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can't agree with the hon. member about the situation being at an impasse. I would be concerned if any Alberta citizen had a problem and found that a solution was not possible to them. We would always try and find solutions. I just urge the hon. member to look into the rules under which we conduct this Legislature, and then he'll find that there are ways for him to proceed.

2:50

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has indicated that he judges his cabinet members on the basis of performance. This issue is an issue of performance, and the Premier has a duty to this Assembly and to the people of Alberta and particularly to those people that feel aggrieved. Does the Premier not feel that the Chief Justice could deal with this effectively, fairly, and quickly?

MR. GETTY: Mr. Speaker, as I've pointed out to the hon. member – and I guess I'll do it for the third time – if he merely uses the rules of the Legislature, which are available and have been for hundreds of years to those of us who have participated in the British parliamentary system, there are ways in which to proceed. Now, one of them isn't grandstanding like the hon. member. If he is serious – and I take him at face value that he is – the rules provide for him to proceed.

MR. SPEAKER: Redwater-Andrew, followed by Edmonton-Calder.

### Rural Economy

MR. ZARUSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Part of the attraction of privatization is that services to the public can be provided through the investment of private capital rather than through public funds. A long-term privatization strategy could include measures such as the community bond concept, that would increase the flow of private investment dollars to finance new business ventures entering market riches opened by the reduction of direct government involvement. My question is to the minister responsible for rural development. Is the community bond concept being considered as part of the local development initiative program?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Mr. Speaker, certainly the local development initiative that the member spoke of, for the refreshment of all members' memories perhaps, was an initiative that was carried by the previous Minister of Municipal Affairs to investigate local development initiatives with the community members themselves. Through that process we received some very good information and some very good advice.

One of the things that was highlighted in that discussion was a distinct willingness of communities to invest in their own communities. They spoke to us of the faith that they held in their communities and their ability to grow and develop. One of the issues they raised in that discussion was the lack of financial flexibility to perhaps achieve that investment. Community bonds are one vehicle that could provide that opportunity. There are others. We are exploring a number of opportunities for the communities and indeed with the communities.

I should also just draw to the members' attention quickly, Mr. Speaker, the business initiatives for Alberta communities program, which is available to communities now through Economic Development and Trade.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Redwater-Andrew.

MR. ZARUSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Have the minister's officials been able to draw upon the expertise of other jurisdictions to prepare an assessment of the success of community bonds and their measures to minimize government's risk exposure?

MRS. McCLELLAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, we certainly do have some experience that we can draw on from other provinces. Manitoba and Saskatchewan have both implemented a type of community bond. However, I would say that most of the experience that we would draw on from those provinces would be in development and implementation, because in those provinces they've been in effect for about one and two years respectively. So obviously from that limited time frame the experience we would gain from them would be limited to those two processes. I would say that we certainly are discussing with people in those provinces how the bonds have worked to this point, and we'll be

carrying on that discussion to ensure that if we introduce a financing vehicle in this province for communities for investment in their own communities, it will have every chance of success and the individual communities across this province will find that it suits their purposes. I would just say that community development . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. [interjections] Thank you.  
Edmonton-Calder, followed by Calgary-North West.

### Day Care Policy

MS MJOLSNESS: Mr. Speaker, a recent survey of wages and working conditions of Canada's day care workers raises serious concerns for Alberta, which has the highest staff turnover rate in the country as well as one of the lowest wage levels, far below the national average. The Minister of Family and Social Services stated last year that he would leave the issue of wages up to the day care operators to determine, but this is clearly not working. My question is to the minister. Given that low wages contribute to high staff turnover and results are that there is a lower quality of care for Alberta children, when will this minister recognize the valuable service and take action to ensure that trained child care workers receive a fair and decent wage?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, to the Member for Edmonton-Calder. I would repeat my position of last year again, and that is to say that it is not the position of this government to determine what wages should be in the nonprofit societies that are providing day care, nor in the private sector. It's up to the societies, it's up to the private sector, and it's up to the parents to determine what those wages should be.

I might point out to the member, Mr. Speaker, that the survey would not have the opportunity of fully evaluating the impact of the recent changes to our day care program here in Alberta. The member knows that we have introduced new training requirements. They are only being phased in at this time, and the member would realize that that obviously will have an impact on the salaries that are being paid.

MS MJOLSNESS: Mr. Speaker, the changes to that program never included wages, and we've got some of the lowest wages in all of the country. I would expect that this minister should be concerned about that.

There's very little accountability when it comes to operating allowances, and even the Auditor General has raised concerns. So I would ask the minister: will this minister now take some action and tie all day care operating funding to quality of care being provided and implement wage enhancement programs for trained child care workers?

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, there is exhaustive accountability within the system today as a result of a number of the changes that we've made. I would again, though, point out to the member what she doesn't describe in evaluating our day care program here in Alberta compared to other provinces. What she fails to mention is that Alberta is the only province in Canada that's been able to meet the demand for day care. We actually have a 23 percent vacancy rate in this province.

I'd go on to say that we could take the Ontario way, where the waiting list is two years long. We could take the Ontario way, where they have just recently announced the closure of 800 subsidized spaces in Toronto. That's the Ontario way, Mr. Speaker. But no, we're not going to take that process. We're

going to continue to work in partnership with parents who helped us to develop our day care reforms, in partnership with societies who helped us to develop those changes, in partnership with advocacy groups. We're going to continue to provide, I think, some of the best day care available in Canada, and it's going to be available, not like in other provinces.

### Global Thermoelectric Inc.

MR. BRUSEKER: Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Global Thermoelectric Power Systems Ltd., which received interest free loans from this government for a total of \$3.7 million, has now been converted to a 25 percent ownership stake in this company. Can the minister explain to Albertans why this money would be loaned without a clearly defined repayment schedule?

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, whenever we do involve ourselves in supporting any company, we always do have a clear criteria as to why we do involve ourselves. As it relates to Global Thermo, I look forward to having further discussions with the hon. member when my estimates do appear before this Legislative Assembly in the next few days.

MR. BRUSEKER: I guess there must not have been a page in the briefing book explaining the answer for the minister.

I'll try again on a different tack. Since this 25 percent equity is now reduced from \$3.7 million to less than three-quarters of a million dollars, how much have we lost so far and how much are we likely to lose in this company?

3:00

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, unlike the hon. member opposite I don't have a script to read from.

I'm more than happy to have a full discussion with the hon. member. As I indicated to him, in just a few short days my estimates will be before this Legislative Assembly, whereby we can underscore the economic initiatives that have resulted in this province being the strongest province and the strongest area in all of North America. We're going to elaborate at that time as to why that is the case so that we can deal with the questions that the hon. member has presented.

MR. SPEAKER: Smoky River.

### Highway 49

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For some years now we've had a mobile and portable section of road called the Watino hill on Highway 49. As a matter of fact, sometimes it's been referred to as the Smoky River bungee jump. To the minister of transportation: could you please provide some insight to my constituents who use Highway 49 on a regular basis as to what the status of this road is, whether indeed there is any effort to change the route of the road, and perhaps some insight as to the developments that may be taking place?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, in short, it's moving, but it's not a very pleasant experience. A number of things have concerned us with the southeast approach to the bridge at Watino because of a major slide that is in fact continuing to move. We have been wanting to work on it for some time, as far back as 1991. One of the difficulties we've been having is getting the farmers to agree to the sale of what would be considered the new right-of-

way in an area where the slide is not occurring, and we just recently had to go to expropriation.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister provide some insight as to what the schedule of development of this important section of road will be?

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, in January we applied for the routing for expropriation. There were five farmers involved, and the five objected. As a result of that, an inquiry officer was appointed. The report from the inquiry officer has just been received; I've not even had a chance to read it. It ruled in our favour, and we will be proceeding from there. That would mean that if we're fortunate, we would have access to the property by September or October, and we may be able, if we get close enough to that, to have a fall tender for work early in the spring of 1993 with the idea that the bulk of the work would be in 1993.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Avonmore.

### Sexual Abuse

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Attorney General. Much attention has been focused on the sexual abuse of vulnerable clients by health care professionals. The College of Physicians and Surgeons task force recommended that the Attorney General initiate legislation which would require that the appropriate regulatory body be immediately informed when charges are laid against a physician or health care professional. Will the Attorney General now commit to reviewing this report with the view of bringing forward such legislation?

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, I believe the final report relating to this issue will be out in June, and I'll be delighted to receive the report and take those considerations at hand.

MS M. LAING: My second question is to the Chair of the Council on Professions and Occupations. Recently a self-styled psychologist was convicted of sexually assaulting a vulnerable young client. This trial points to the need to protect the public from unscrupulous and unethical health care professionals. Will the Chair commit the Council on Professions and Occupations to looking into these matters and not simply dismissing them as a matter of buyer beware?

MRS. MIROSH: Mr. Speaker, the Professions and Occupations Bureau has been in consultation with the Psychologists Association and with the AG's office. We're trying to come up with a solution in regards to this issue.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Jasper Place.

### Bow Valley Development

MR. McINNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of the Environment has recently acknowledged that he exempted from environmental review the Canmore golf resort headed by Hal Walker, his PC constituency president, a company properly known as CADCO. Recently exemptions were granted on the Three Sisters project for lands known as Canmore 75 within the town boundaries and also on some of the golf course lands. That by the way includes such PC cronies as Bill Dickie and Frank King. There's a third project in the area owned by Don Cormie.

I'm not sure if he's a Tory or Liberal crony these days. That one's not under review because the proposal's not complete. [interjection] The Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark says that he's not a New Democrat. You bet he's not, and you're not either, thank God. Anyway, we were promised a comprehensive review, but it seems that there are a lot of holes involved in this review. I'm wondering if the Minister of the Environment is not concerned that with everything that's happened in the last three years, this sort of half-baked, piecemeal approach will result in numerous lawsuits and possibly another federal environmental review at the end of the day.

MR. KLEIN: No, Mr. Speaker, I'm not concerned at all. I think that we have put in place a process that is as pure as it can possibly be, and that's the Natural Resources Conservation Board. It's an exceptionally good process.

With respect to Canmore Alpine Development, Mr. Speaker, I think I've got to set the record straight. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Jasper Place is talking about a fine gentlemen, one of the finest gentlemen to walk the face of the earth, which is a lot more than I can say for this individual.

MR. McINNIS: Sooner or later he's going to have to decide whether he represents his PC president or the people of Alberta. He's going to have to make that decision.

I don't know how he can call it a pure process when this project's exempted, half of that one's exempted, that one's not included, and public hearings on the Three Sisters project as well as the Kan-Alta project, headed by another group of Tories, Norm Kimball and Jackie Parker among others, will proceed in June without any representation from downstream water users in the city of Calgary or a group of people in Canmore who are concerned about coal mines under the ground there which may subside. In view of the fact that these decisions on intervenor funding were made by the NRCB in conflict with the previous rulings in the Swan Hills case, I would like to ask the minister if he's prepared to discuss with the Chair of the NRCB what criteria are being used to make intervenor funding decisions, or is he bent on a quick approval process regardless.

MR. KLEIN: The NRCB, as the hon. member well knows, is a quasi-judicial body that has the authority to adjudicate intervenor funding. With respect to the Kan-Alta proposal, that has been advertised for a NRCB hearing. With respect to Three Sisters, that is going before the Natural Resources Conservation Board. With respect to Canmore Alpine Development, that project was initiated in 1986, long before the NRCB was a notion. The proponent played by all the rules of the day. This member would have that proponent go back and be subjected to rules that were put in place long after he received all the permits and the necessary regulatory approvals that were required at that time.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Meadowlark.

### Bovar Inc.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Swan Hills joint venture with Bovar Inc. has guaranteed a 12 to 16 percent profit to Bovar and has cost Albertans \$171 million since 1985. Why did the Minister of the Environment fail to invoke the provision in the agreement that the terms and conditions of the agreement with Bovar shall – not maybe, not perhaps, but shall – be subject to review on or about June 30, 1989? Where's the review?

MR. KLEIN: Obviously the member, as usual, wasn't listening when I answered a similar question in this House about three or four weeks ago. I said that that matter has now been put to a review. It's under review as we speak.

3:10

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, the same agreement calls for a review of the guaranteed profit. That review is provided for in June 1989 as well. Has the minister provided for that review? If not, why not?

MR. KLEIN: As a result of the proposed expansion, which by the way was reviewed by the Natural Resources Conservation Board in a full and complete and very intensive public process, the whole contract with respect to Bovar is under review.

#### Edmonton Remand Centre

MR. GESELL: Mr. Speaker, concern was expressed yesterday in this House by the Member for Edmonton-Belmont, I believe, over the design capacity and the actual number of inmates at the Edmonton Remand Centre. Comments were also made by centre staff regarding the shortage of permanent staff trained to adequately deal with that situation. To the Solicitor General: is he concerned about the serious nature of these comments?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, I have visited the Edmonton Remand Centre. Suffice it to say that it is a very, very busy place, and I am impressed with the ability of the staff and correctional officers to cope with this. I am very concerned about their workload, and we are looking into that at the moment.

MR. GESELL: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that there have been some discussions among management, staff, and AUPE. Could the minister please explain what the results of those discussions have been?

DR. WEST: Mr. Speaker, the discussions that took place revolved around the use of casual employees in permanent positions as a result of downsizing. In order to ensure that sufficient vacant permanent positions are available to place permanent employees that are impacted by the downsizing, there has been a freeze on the recruitment of permanent employees. This placement process is currently under way and should be completed shortly. Once it is completed, I will authorize the recruitment to all permanent, frontline correctional officers, living unit officers, probation officers, and youth worker positions. These positions, which are currently covered off by wage or casual positions, are involved with the direct management and control of offenders. As they involve public and staff safety, these positions are not subject to government staffing freezes at the present time.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary-Mountain View.

#### Olympia & York Developments Limited

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When you factor in all the costs that the government is paying on their lease for office space in the Olympia & York centre in downtown Edmonton, you find that they're paying in the order of \$24 per square foot. However, a recent rental survey of the Edmonton market indicates that the government should be expected to pay no more than \$12 to \$14 per square foot for that space instead. This means that this government could be paying a premium of as much as \$12 per square foot for that space. A premium of only

\$10 per square foot would mean that the taxpayers are paying \$4.2 million more than they have to for that space in the Olympia & York centre. I'd like to ask the minister: will he tell us why the taxpayers are being asked to pay at least \$4.2 million more than they have to?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, on page 479 of *Alberta Hansard*, dated April 24, 1992, I responded to that question. I indicated that we were paying essentially \$8.75 per square foot, and I outlined the half a dozen parameters that went into the lease. Those figures that I provided in this Legislative Assembly last Friday are indeed correct figures, and I'll repeat them again today.

MR. HAWKESWORTH: Well, when you include all of the costs, Mr. Speaker, it is \$24 a square foot.

This Olympia & York lease deal was originally done with a good friend of the Premier's, in secret, behind closed doors. The lease was let without public tender, and to add insult to injury, the government has steadfastly refused to make the lease public. I'd like to ask, Mr. Speaker: given that the taxpayers deserve more than a \$4.2 million wastage of their money, will the minister turn all the documentation over to the Auditor General, ask him to do a special value-for-money audit of this lease, and make all the documentation and the Auditor General's results public?

MR. KOWALSKI: Mr. Speaker, I've indicated in this Assembly on several occasions now what the general parameters of this particular lease are. I've also pointed out what the confirmation figures are. I've also indicated that on the Order Paper there will be a series of questions with respect to the O & Y leases that will be brought up during this session of the Legislature. I've also indicated that I'd be very pleased to appear before the Public Accounts Committee of this particular Assembly, a Public Accounts Committee that indeed is chaired by a member of the NDP caucus. I've indicated that I'd be very happy to do that, as I indicated last year and the year before. I've also indicated that the estimates of the Department of Public Works, Supply and Services will be forthcoming. There is even a provision for the NDP to designate a particular department's estimates for a Wednesday of a particular week, and if the NDP would like to invite me to come before this Assembly on a Wednesday, when they would designate, I would be delighted to do it. I would be delighted to deal with all the concerns and the questions. The NDP needn't hide behind fantasy. They simply ask the question, and I will respond.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

#### Drug Abuse Treatment

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A decision to make Albertans seek prior approval for out-of-country drug treatment is an understandable move given the rising costs. The committee responsible, however, has refused prior approval for four out of five applicants with no explanation given. My questions are to the Minister of Health. Will the minister please intervene to ensure that applicants are given a full explanation as to why their request was refused?

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, the whole purpose of setting up a prior approval mechanism before U.S. treatment was done perhaps as a matter of course was to ensure that we exhausted treatment options in Alberta first, in Canada second, before U.S. treatment was looked at as an alternative. The people that serve

on this committee I have the highest regard for, including three members of the public who have very good experience with issues of substance addiction. However, for the minister to intervene in the process, I think, would be inappropriate at this point. What we have seen, as the hon. member has indicated, is that the committee has to date reviewed five applications. One was approved, and four have been asked for some additional information or have received advice from the committee to look more closely at Alberta and Canadian options. I think the process is the appropriate one.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, yes. I, too, have high regard for the members of the committee, but Albertans need to be served. Will the minister, however, instruct the committee or place in their mandate the requirement that unsuccessful applicants must be given a list of alternative centres that are covered under Alberta health care?

MS BETKOWSKI: I think it's a very useful suggestion, Mr. Speaker. Certainly it is the purpose of the committee to ensure that those options are evident to the individual before the U.S. alternative is chosen, but I think it's a useful suggestion and one that I would be pleased to pass on to the committee.

MR. SPEAKER: Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

### Health Care System

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the hon. Minister of Health. We all know that we in Alberta have the best health care system in North America, even in northern isolated communities, and the health care system has improved drastically in the past 20 years or so. We also know that the health care budget this year is over \$3.5 billion, and we all know that we need to look at innovative ways of streamlining our health care costs. My question to the hon. minister is: in light of the fact that the cost of providing health care to Albertans is rising, does the minister foresee an expanded role for nurse practitioners in order to reduce costs in Alberta?

3:20

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I do see an expanded role for nurses and other health providers in the future. It's not only cost that drives us towards this decision; it's ensuring that we utilize the skills of our professionals in the highest valued way that we possibly can, including those of physicians, including those to recognize the very special training that nurses have in our province. It really comes down to the issue of better use of what we have as opposed to an add-on, but I certainly, in summary, believe that we can see an expanded role for nurses.

MR. CARDINAL: Mr. Speaker, my supplemental is to the hon. minister. We all know that in the past we have had problems in attracting a sufficient number of physicians to northern communities. Could the minister see an expanded role for nurse practitioners to assume greater responsibility for services in northern communities?

MS BETKOWSKI: I think we need to look at the special needs of the northern communities, Mr. Speaker, and ensure that there is reasonable access to health services. Nurse practitioners are one option and certainly an option that many of the MLAs who

represent northern constituencies in this Assembly have spoken to me about. We are looking within health professions, including actions through the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses, the Alberta Medical Association, at some less restrictive professional legislation to match the new advances of professionals and technology. Certainly I hope that complementing our role statement process, as we look at the role of the existing infrastructure in Alberta, we will see an expanded role for professionals and institutions.

### Municipal Financing Corporation

MR. EWASIUK: Mr. Speaker, the Treasurer's ill-advised decision to steal money from local authorities of Alberta continues to have ramifications.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Order. Order.

### Speaker's Ruling Parliamentary Language

MR. SPEAKER: It's an appropriate call to order. Perhaps the member would withdraw the word "steal" and think of something else. You're still recognized. Withdraw, please, and then carry on.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Treasurer's ill-advised decision to skim money from the local authorities of Alberta continues . . .

MR. SPEAKER: How about the word "divert" or something?

### Municipal Financing Corporation

(continued)

MR. EWASIUK: . . . to have ramifications. Today we have learned that the cities are considering suing the provincial government for the money the taxpayers paid to them. Even the AUMA, including towns and villages, supports the repayment of the moneys to local authorities, who generated these funds. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: given that the Municipal Financing Corporation states that surpluses belong to the local authorities not to the provincial government, how can the minister justify the Provincial Treasurer grabbing the surplus when it clearly doesn't belong to the provincial government?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, I'm not entirely sure that the Minister of Municipal Affairs has to justify anything that the Provincial Treasurer is perceived as doing. However, it permitted us, of course, to distribute in June \$200 million of that amount unconditionally to the municipalities of this province. That is in fact being done. We are complying with our promise in the AMPLE program of distributing \$500 million, and we are collapsing the time in which it is distributed. They will receive \$200 million for their unconditional use this year.

MR. EWASIUK: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General has always listed the Municipal Financing Corporation surplus as restricted profits and equity in the provincial financial statements. This means that the money does not belong to the province, it belongs to the local authorities. Given this fact, how can the minister stand idly by and refuse to defend the municipalities' position while money that belongs to the local authorities is transferred to the provincial coffers?

MR. FOWLER: Mr. Speaker, I think it should be clearly understood that what has happened here of course has resulted in a situation whereby our two major cities believe incorrectly that they have been shortchanged. If in fact the distribution had been made in accordance with the method they would like to have seen, then every municipality other than the two cities would have received less than what was done. I have a responsibility toward all municipalities in this province, not merely the two major ones.

MR. SPEAKER: Might we revert to Introduction of Special Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried. Thank you.  
Minister of Health.

head: **Introduction of Special Guests**  
(*reversion*)

MS BETKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I provided a very fine introduction, I thought, of some visitors to our Assembly from the Lynnwood school accompanied by their teacher Mrs. Overand and the parent helpers who I named. Unfortunately they weren't in the Assembly when I introduced them. Now that they have arrived, I would ask if they would receive the warm welcome of the members of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: West Yellowhead.

MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the galleries today we have some very learned children from the town of Hinton, 54 students with their parents and teachers. We have Mrs. Lois Tunke, Mrs. Eileen Samuelson, Mrs. Velma Armani, Mrs. Judy Grinnell, Mrs. Nancy Gould, Erica and Bondi Kovaks, along with Nicholas Kovaks on the far left. I would like them to stand and receive the warm welcome of the Legislature.

**Point of Order**  
**Parliamentary Language**

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I had a point of order. During question period the Member for Edmonton-Beverly in fact used the word and accused the Provincial Treasurer of stealing money. I did not hear a full retraction under the orders of the Assembly, including Standing Order 13 of our own procedures and, of course, 491. I did not hear a specific retraction, and I require it.

MR. SPEAKER: Well, hon. Provincial Treasurer, you can request it; I don't think you can require it. Nevertheless, the Chair does look to Edmonton-Beverly. At the time I think that the member was understandably flustered at being interrupted in his flow. I wonder if Edmonton-Beverly has had a chance to think about retracting that phrase, please.

MR. EWASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed I retract the word "steal" if it's unparliamentary, but I do believe I did change the word from "steal" to "skim." [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: That doesn't help. [interjections] Order.

MR. JOHNSTON: Most reasonable people would consider the words "steal" and "skim" to suggest some sort of illicit activity on behalf of the government, and I absolutely believe that is not right, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Chair believes that the Member for Edmonton-Beverly did retract the first phrase.

Secondly, when the member was trying to give the introduction to his first question, the Chair did intervene again with respect to the word "skim," so I hope that the member will do the gracious thing with regard to this phrase as well, please.

Edmonton-Beverly.

MR. SIGURDSON: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm sorry. It involves Edmonton-Beverly. I'm waiting for some response there. Then I'd be only too happy to speak to you. Thank you.

MR. EWASIUK: Mr. Speaker, if the Treasurer is so thin skinned and feels offended by the use of the word "skim," I certainly withdraw that word as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. [interjections] Order please.  
Order.

Edmonton-Belmont.

**Point of Order**  
**Explanation of Speaker's Ruling**

MR. SIGURDSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to your finding the word "skim" offensive, sir, I'm wondering if that's now being ruled as unparliamentary language in this Legislative Assembly? [interjections]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. members, there wasn't a ruling from the Chair. There was an invitation from the Chair to the Member for Edmonton-Beverly. Edmonton-Beverly responded. That's what happened. Thank you.

head: **Orders of the Day**

**3:30**

head: **Written Questions**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that the written questions on today's Order Paper stand and retain their places except for the following: written questions 167 and 279.

[Motion carried]

**Fuel Conservation**

167. Mr. Mitchell asked the government the following question:  
How many barrels per day has Alberta's average fuel consumption dropped since the announcement of the \$90,000 Energywise fuel conservation campaign announced by the Minister of Energy on January 30, 1991?

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the government must reject that written question. However, I'd certainly recommend the hon. member submit it again as a motion for a return, because it's very complicated.

**Family Violence**

279. Mrs. Hewes asked the government the following question:  
How many charges have been laid by police for the period April 1, 1991, to March 31, 1992, relating to family violence situations?

MR. GOGO: The government, Mr. Speaker, is prepared to accept Written Question 279.



head: **Motions for Returns**

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I move that the motions for returns on today's Order Paper all stand and retain their places.

[Motion carried]

head: **Motions Other than Government Motions**

**Employment Flexibility**

207. Moved by Mrs. Osterman:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly encourage public- and private-sector employers to initiate opportunities that promote flexibility in employment, such as job sharing and home-based employment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Three Hills.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today as a private member I have the opportunity to bring forward something that has concerned me for some time, and that is our ability to offer flexibility in employment.

I must admit that at noon today as I listened to one of my colleagues give a very excellent speech on the Constitution at an annual meeting that I was at – incidentally, it was the advisory board to the Salvation Army in Edmonton – I listened to this speech, and I said to myself that with such big issues on our plate as the Constitution and the economy, why would I be talking about employment opportunities today? Then I realized once again that, as we are often pointed to do, we end up looking at a big picture that concerns us so much that we sort of throw up our hands and say: “Can I address all of this? Am I, as one individual, capable of making an impact?” Mr. Speaker, I guess that's the very point. We are capable of making an impact. What we have to do is take a tiny corner of that big picture and address it in the best way we know how.

Mr. Speaker, the motion reads:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly encourage public- and private-sector employers to initiate opportunities that promote flexibility in employment, such as job sharing and home-based employment.

Now, I think all of us know that this is an area that you could speak about for days simply because of all the opportunities we might dream about out there that either exist or could exist. I think what we will do is aim at what we are capable of effecting. I say that we must do that with vigour and with vision because there has never been a time, in my view, where conditions in society point more to the need for flexibility of employment.

What role does employment play in our lives? Do we believe all work has value, or have we become snobs about various kinds of work? When I mention worker employment today, I'm speaking of paid employment. Many of us have done so-called work for a great portion of our lives and didn't get a paycheque, and it was very, very valuable. Potentially, I suppose, it could be described, in the case of raising a family, as the most valuable work that one could be given to undertake, but in today's world we talk about paid work and the value of that.

I promote this motion because I believe many people have been precluded from work and others are leaving home to do work to the detriment of their family. The people who have been precluded from work have made a decision not to leave their young children in the care of others, outsiders particularly. Others, who are working outside the home, are very concerned about their children because they know there are no guarantees that their children are cared for in the manner that meets their emotional needs. No matter how well trained the care givers are,

you cannot ensure that children's emotional needs are being met other than by their parents.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Is there reason to be concerned about the opportunities for work? Well, let's have a look at today's family. Just a few statistics. Do children witness the importance of work? Do parents have time to impact or, more importantly, imprint their children? I believe in the intrinsic value of work and the importance of it to our own self-esteem. When we look at Alberta families, a quick glimpse tells us a number of things, especially in terms of society as a whole.

The economic side. We often stand in this Legislature and talk with a great deal of pride about the economy of Alberta. Does the economy of Alberta ensure the well-being of our families? Interesting question. We have the second highest income in Canada. That should make for a wonderful family life and wonderful children that are growing up in a way that we desire, I would think, if that's the measurement we use. We have the highest labour force participation. Forty-five percent of mothers with children under the age of 16 are employed full-time. Now, are parents because of this making an effort to be more involved in the lives of their children? Well, I think they probably find the energy and the time to do this difficult to come by. One might ask: is it because it is not a priority? Sadly, in some cases that is true, Mr. Speaker, but most surveys show that parents want the opportunity to be more at the centre of raising their children. So with that in mind, with this feeling that they would rather have more time with their children, we can imagine the stress in not fulfilling that goal.

In the social statistics, Mr. Speaker, alongside the economic statistics that talk about this great economy of ours, we have the most divorces in Canada and many other social statistics that would probably cause us, if recited today, to feel pretty crestfallen in terms of our ability to address this question. Once again I say we must address it with vigour and vision and a great deal of confidence which should typify Albertans' ability to address problems. Imagine our families as a critical mass, a ball that is spinning faster and faster. They are spinning faster and faster because of the rapid changes in our society, and when you look at our children today, it's almost as if the centrifugal force accompanying that spin is throwing our children out of control and out of the safe haven of their homes. They do not have the ability to cling in the same way the adults do.

Mr. Speaker, we can't address every problem associated with work or the lack of it, but we can look at the big picture, roll up our sleeves, and address at least one component: the need for flexibility not only in employment but we should also look at self-employment. Let us look at what is being done and energetically pursue initiatives for the future. Again our goal should be flexibility in every sense.

**3:40**

There are a lot of reasons, as I began to mention, Mr. Speaker, for pursuing this goal, particularly looking at self-employment. I think it's interesting to note that a high percentage of new businesses are being started by women. Of course, I think we all understand that in the past that was the male bastion. Many of these businesses are indeed home business, and they are a finding a way to mesh business and family.

The other part of it is the fact that many of us at a more advanced stage are required to look for work. It's often mentioned to me in the constituency that politicians should be the first

ones to keep their options open for changing careers. I note that somebody made a very positive comment that advancing age need not be a deterrent to starting out on your own. Now, for those of us whose hair is very naturally a certain colour, we won't necessarily admit to advancing age, but certainly we are more mature than others. How are the people in, say, the 50-and-over age category looked at? Well, if you're over 50 and wondering about starting out in something new and different, such as being your own boss, there is good news. According to a study conducted by the Commonwealth Fund, workers over 50 are found to be just as easy to train as younger workers and actually more flexible regarding assignments and work schedules. [interjection] I have a few hon. members trying to contribute to my speech. Maybe I should incorporate their comments.

In addition, older workers are less likely to be absent from work and have a lower turnover rate. So chances are we'll make good employers ourselves, and self-employers. That's an important aspect.

The other notion that's put here is that working is good for a woman's heart. Now, we all know that women live longer, and there's a lot of conjecture about why that occurs. It's probably because maybe we don't think about ourselves as much as men do; we're concentrating and looking after other people in our lives. Research by the World Health Organization shows that "working women have a higher level of the good HDL cholesterol than non-working housewives." How do you like that: working women. "When the women in the study stopped working, their HDL count dropped." So certainly that augers well for saying that it is good and it's healthy to balance both work and family. That's one plus.

They're not all pluses. Harried mothers working away from home have greater stress and increased risk of heart disease. Now, that seems the other side of the coin. Research from Yale University School of Nursing found that women torn between career and family, especially those who believe their home lives have forced job sacrifices, are at higher risk than other women for serious heart disease. After taking into account other risk factors like age, obesity, and smoking, the Yale study found women who felt tension between work and home were significantly more likely to have been hospitalized at least once for heart disease. Those who had the strongest feelings of conflict were nine times more likely to have serious heart problems. Mr. Speaker, this is just beginning to be looked at because we do not have a long history of women in the work force to the degree that they are now.

It seems that stress from trying to balance career and family begins as soon as the new mother leaves home to return to work. A study reported in *Women & Health* compares stress levels of new mothers who returned full-time to a job away from home with stress levels of stay-at-home moms. The results showed that mothers returning to work reported significantly higher stress levels.

The moms heading back to the workplace did manage to meet their parenting responsibilities but only through neglecting their own well-being.

How many people recognize this?

For example, those mothers working away at a job had less healthy lifestyles

– once again the need to try to balance work and the responsibility you feel for your family.

Now, Mr. Speaker, lest there is the impression left that only women fall into this category, let me say that there are many more men in today's society taking a far greater role in the day-to-day care of their families. So all of these statistics certainly are important for men and for women. Indeed, we must balance.

Mr. Speaker, in looking for specifics, I certainly was taken by an article that I read a couple of years ago in a professional

magazine. I believe it was an accounting magazine. It's not just employment in sort of the large factory setting or whatever, the secretarial pool and so on. We're talking about employment or self-employment in the professions. The article was entitled Halving It All. It was spelled h-a-l-v-i-n-g. They were really referring to a double meaning. There were people sharing their professional jobs – and this doesn't just apply to women – each half-time, and then accommodating the role. Although others would see the other part of the time to be useful possibly in later years when they wish and have the ability financially to look after themselves and don't need full-time employment and would enjoy that half-time for other pursuits, for the purposes of my discussion today I am focusing more in the family vein. So we're talking about halving it all.

I think that the Minister of Advanced Education has from time to time commented on various statistics about the postsecondary institutions in Alberta: the enormous budget, a budget that is beyond belief when one measures where we were 20 years ago and where we are now, this budget educating people in Alberta basically for careers and so on. When we talk about professionals, most professionals today have a minimum of a four-year university education and many, many beyond that. Now, in this country, and particularly Alberta, university and technical and college education is very highly subsidized, enormously so. Every taxpayer in Alberta has an investment in this. So for us to watch people enter into a career stream only for a couple of years and after that literally disappear and lose it because they believe, importantly, that something else has to come first, something else has intervened, the family – for this to be lost is not only a loss of a person's ability to contribute in that professional area, but it is an enormous loss to the taxpayers. Let's be very crass about this. We have a humongous accumulated debt. It cannot go on. We must address what it is that we can do to work better and smarter and keep a quality of life that is so important and a responsibility in our lives that I think some of us may have just skipped over in our hurry to search for other things. So when looking at that, Mr. Speaker, I would say that we would promote amongst professionals job sharing, the idea that that can occur.

Of course, government needs to set an example. Indeed, our government has made some effort in putting together information and collecting statistics and advocating work flexibility in employment. We see flextimes in some cases. We see work-at-home opportunities. For the small family, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about work at home. For the employer, work at home means the recruitment and retention of skilled employees. Work-at-home programs allow an organization to attract and retain talented and trained employees who might not otherwise be available. Interesting examples can happen: disability, child care responsibilities, relocation, or personal preference. For example, it would allow a computer programmer recovering from an illness or a new mother to continue working on an unfinished project. Similarly, a retired employee such as a secretary might enjoy the opportunity to work part-time when the company faces an unusual workload or period of unexpected absenteeism. That individual has the opportunity to keep skills current.

### 3:50

Work at home can also tap new labour sources among homebound people; for example again, the disabled people and populations living in rural areas. Those of us from rural Alberta certainly understand the frustration of seeing the jobs, particularly government jobs, growing in major centres. We could potentially look at not building new buildings in Edmonton or Calgary or Red Deer or other places but utilizing the spaces that are all over

Alberta, skilled people who are presently at home and would be available to us. There's a reduction in office space and equipment needs obviously. An estimation is given that each employer must annually spend \$2,000 to \$6,000 per employee for office space. Organizations can save on facility costs as well and parking costs of course.

Productivity gains, Mr. Speaker, in fact have been analyzed. They're widespread in terms of productivity levels rising: the lack of interruptions and improved concentration, increased motivation and job satisfaction, higher dedication and morale, and a higher level of energy on the job due to the elimination of wasted time. What is wasted time? Wherever we are traveling to work, how many of us drive side by side with cars and there is one person driving for 15, 20 minutes, a half an hour or an hour each way every day?

MR. HYLAND: Nobody else will ride with us.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Well, the hon. Member for Cypress-Redcliff says that nobody else will ride with him. I think he said "us," but actually I won't accept that, Mr. Speaker. It may be his problem. In fairness to the hon. Member for Cypress-Redcliff, I think he was alluding to the fact that some people are afraid to ride with me because I have a heavy foot. I now have admitted to that publicly.

A two-year pilot project, Mr. Speaker, on telework at New York Telephone involving two dozen managers reported productivity gains averaging 43 percent per participant. There are a multitude of statistics that one could cite, and I'm afraid they would get boring, if I haven't bored you already. In terms of the enhancement of flexibility, especially for hours and so on, work at home gives an employer the opportunity to have a 24-hour workday, depending on the choosing of the individual employee. Such flexibility permits some employers to improve their customer service. Imagine being able to give over, through a calling system, to a person that is available, on call at any time. Because they are at home and they don't need to be at the office, they're available to solve whatever it is that the customer requests. Some companies also achieve flexibility by combining work at home with different contractual status of its workers. Some workers may have regular contracts with full benefits while others are self-employed or engaged during peak demand periods. We've already mentioned that.

Mr. Speaker, for the employee I guess many things are obvious, flexibility again being the key benefit especially if you have a young family and you can work your hours around their schedule. Employees don't face rush hour traffic. Savings on gasoline and vehicle wear and tear. Needless to say, it may mean saving a vehicle purchase. No lost time in traveling, which we've mentioned before. For many people – and I would say this applies to men more than women – the stress of driving in traffic. Most males, I have witnessed, are much shorter in terms of their patience – I'm now treading on thin ground – with some obnoxious drivers. All of us decry obnoxious drivers. I think it is fair to say that all of us, male or female, recognize the times when our blood pressure level has increased significantly, more than we would like, while driving to work. Imagine eliminating this; how wonderful it would be.

Work at home, of course, is particularly advantageous to new mothers or physically handicapped people. Again that's a reinforcement from comments previously made. The increased individual productivity, the autonomy, the sense of being in charge of yourself adds to that dignity that I spoke about earlier, the dignity that work brings. Mr. Speaker, the importance of children seeing their parents work, what it is that they do, I

believe is critical. My husband would say, "Imagine the wardrobe that would be saved." One of my colleagues said, "You don't need to buy a new suit to drive the combine." Things like that, and there's a few farmers that would say amen to that.

Mr. Speaker, what is government's role as we talk about the potential in so many areas? We're only touching on a few of them today. Hopefully, my colleagues in the Legislature will give many more examples, and hopefully positive examples, with an idea that we will overcome whatever negatives there are. Government's role as I see it is a facilitator. Government's role is not to do for people but to facilitate, let people do for themselves. They're willing to. So often we take that initiative away from them. I think we have to make sure that pension laws, labour laws where applicable assist the private sector, both employer and employees. There may be some initial net cost to employers, but the potential gains in productivity and the sense of well-being of people is going to far outweigh some of those costs.

Then government must as well set the example. Let us look at our own shop. The thousands of people – I'm not sure; I should have gotten that statistic. How many people presently work for the government of Alberta? How many people work in the universities? How many people work in the hospitals? It goes on and on and on. The public sector in this province, Mr. Speaker, is of an unbelievable size. Many of them are doing great work in looking at that kind of flexibility and job sharing. I'm aware of a number of things, for instance, that are done in hospitals and indeed within our own government, but we must set that example in an aggressive way. Why are we not examining every single facet of work in the public sector and saying, "Can we give people more individual opportunity?" Think of what it would mean for those people.

I think, Mr. Speaker, everyone would agree that individuals are the ones that are going to be the innovators. They will innovate and find better ways of doing things when they're setting about doing their own task with their own responsibility and not working within a great mass. Now, all jobs can't have that kind of flexibility, but we've got to search those opportunities out and make them available to people.

The innovation I talked about I believe so strongly, I guess, because I go back to an agricultural sector, which I know most about. Many people look at the farmer and those of us who have worked the land. I'm sure they drive by and look at the farmer who is driving by himself, by herself, hour after hour in the field, for those who are raising cereal and oilseed crops, cultivating our land. What do you suppose is happening in that vehicle as we go round and round? Well, I hope you would think about that.

AN HON. MEMBER: You get dizzy.

MRS. OSTERMAN: No, we don't get dizzy; we think.

Mr. Speaker, surely there's a correlation between that individual activity and the productivity in agriculture. So much of that productivity has come about not with thousands of people working in one place; it comes about as a result of individuals knowing that they must continually look to do things better and faster, more efficiently.

4:00

Mr. Speaker, there are so many examples that can be made. I think about an example that I've seen in my own family. This spring, while I was down in the states, I watched a son, who is a doctor in nuclear medicine and radiology, sitting in his home with a modem 30 miles from a hospital where he operates as a specialist. Some accident cases came in that were going through

the various testing: all the complicated diagnostic tools that we have, whether it's the CAT scan, the gamma camera, and so on. This was translated through the telephone lines with the modem and came up on his television screen at home – he didn't have to drive to the hospital – thereby giving absolutely instant assistance in terms of what had to be done.

I give that example because there has never been a time when there have been greater advancements in technology. Now I put this question to members of the Legislature: is the human person a tool of technology, or are we going to use technology to be a tool of our own to use for the betterment of society? Mr. Speaker, I would like to think that a slight reversal to the past can occur. My closing point is: wouldn't it be wonderful if children again could walk by some workplaces and see what it is that people do and what makes the world and the economy go around? Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore.

MS M. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the member for bringing forward this motion and for her articulate way of putting forward the reasons for this commitment to flexibility in the workplace and for work in the home.

I think the motion is of particular interest to parents, especially mothers, and recognizes the economic and social realities of the '90s as we see increasing numbers of families and indeed the majority of families needing two incomes in order to survive. We also see the aspirations of women to be mothers and to succeed in careers as well, and in careers of their choice. We see the increase in the numbers of families headed by single parents, 80 percent of those single parents being women. In addition, we see the increasing need for women to participate in the paid labour force. We hear statistics about how a significant number of the people hired in the future will be women. This motion allows for us to move forward with new solutions in difficult and changing times, instead of hearkening back to the idealized times of the past, and as the member has stated, to take advantage of the technology and the opportunities that technology affords us to create a society more in keeping with our values.

This kind of flexibility at work would also provide for shared parenting and equity for men and women in the home and in the paid labour force – I think not a small contribution – so that men can be more involved in the parenting of children. We certainly heard much in the past about how destructive it has been – not that I agree with that – that men were not involved very much in parenting. I think children benefit from their fathers being involved in the parenting, and for sure fathers themselves benefit. I think we would have a much more equitable and less violent society if men and women shared in the parenting of children.

We have heard much in recent times about how to make the workplace more responsive to the needs of families. Often we think of families with young children, but I think experience teaches us that children need their parents to be somewhat accessible even when they're in their teens and in their 20s. We have also heard much about the lost skill and potential that women can provide to society through their participation in the paid labour force and how that has been lost when women have been kept out of the paid labour force because of responsibility for having and caring for children. These kinds of initiatives also provide recognition that mothering and parenting are an important contribution to society and should not be undervalued, marginalized, and dismissed as something you do when you aren't doing something else which tends to be held to be more important.

I think that's so crucial, that many of our policies and regulations seem to be based on a belief that after you've done a full day's work, then you can go home and feed the kids, take care of the kids, as if that doesn't take energy and skill and time. These kinds of initiatives say, hey, we have to pay attention to whatever it is to parent and recognize that parenting is important work. It's important for society. It is work. I thank the member for bringing this forward.

Mr. Speaker, in 1985 a report from a first ministers' meeting held that, and I quote,

until the full potential of women is realized, the Canadian economy will not perform to its maximum. Until the barriers that restrict this potential are overcome, the potential of all Canadians will be limited.

This is a task force of first ministers of Canada.

Many women's potential and participation are limited by our society's failure to recognize and to value women's bearing and caring for children and to provide for practices of equity rather than equality, because equality is based on the notion of equals being treated equally. What equity recognizes is that there are different factors, and that equity allows for us to have an opportunity to achieve equal ends.

We have placed barriers, obstacles in the paths of women who are mothers and who also want to pursue careers. As prestigious a publication as the *Harvard Business Review* in a 1989 article described women who want to be mothers and to have careers in this way.

The majority of women, however, are what I call career-and-family women, women who want to pursue serious careers while participating actively,

and I would emphasize "actively",

in the rearing of children. These women are a precious resource that has yet to be mined. Many of them are talented and creative.

Well, I'd say all mothers are talented and creative. Anyway, the article goes on to say that for all women who want to combine career and family, the key to retention is to provide flexibility and the family supports they need in order to function effectively.

As the member opposite has noted, I think that not only does society benefit from women's participation in society through work outside of the home, outside of caring and nurturing children, but the women themselves do. In fact, women with proper, adequate support for their families and for them are healthier emotionally and physically. They are the emotionally and physically healthiest women. What wears women down is having the double burden of being in the paid labour force and also having the full burden of care of children.

#### 4:10

What we're talking about also, then, is supports like quality child care; I think on-site child care so that when you have a baby you can take your baby and every four hours go and nurse it and not worry about it. This motion speaks to the need for that flexibility. It does not address the need for family supports which, as I've said, would include quality, on-site child care so that working parents – and I've used the word "parents" advisedly – can devote their energies to their work instead of worrying about the well-being of their children. Having been a mother of a child requiring child care, I remember how worrying it was when things were going wrong for that child. Some of the initiatives that could be proposed are part-time work with benefits. It allows the person to stay in touch, to maintain skills and a knowledge base while they are taking primary or considerable responsibility for children. It reduces fatigue and stress and may reduce the need for extended paid maternity leave, job sharing, or shared employment.

We have job sharing in our workplace, and I remember the kind of reluctance to try this new idea because it wasn't quite

known how it would work. Of course, it's a wonderful idea. You get twice the number of ideas and twice the energy and continuity of service for the price of one person. So in many ways you get two for the price of one. It provides for flexibility in scheduling and works at every level. I know of an agency here in Edmonton whose executive directorship was job-shared. We had fear and trepidation when we considered job sharing, and let me tell you, their board of directors certainly did, but they found again that it was an excellent solution. The two people filling that position brought different skills and a different approach, so the service was enhanced and enriched. Job sharing means that two people take responsibility for one job; it's not two part-time workers. That means that together they communicate and develop a sense of how the job will be done. It means uninterrupted coverage of the job as one covers for the other during vacation or if there's family responsibility leave, that kind of thing, so that customers, clients, and consumers have uninterrupted access to service. As I said earlier, it may well have the advantage of two minds seeking solutions. Both employees and employers benefit from this arrangement, and I think it's just a case of overcoming fear of change to bring in job sharing and flextime, these kinds of things.

I think that this kind of a motion and these kinds of initiatives are recognition in more than rhetoric of the value of children, child care, and mothering to our society. Women in the past have been economically disadvantaged by the biological reality that they give birth to children and by the societal expectation that women are primarily responsible for caring for and nurturing children. This disadvantage has meant that children are dependent either on a man or society for their economic well-being, and if anything destroys self-esteem, it's those conditions where one cannot take care of oneself and one's children. This dependence has entrapped women and children into lives of violence and poverty, and I think more and more we're hearing about that and know that.

At the present time, I guess I would just draw attention to this: the need for the government to understand and take a lesson from these proposals. We have government policies, social assistance policies that require a mother whose youngest child is over two years of age to be seeking employment or training. That mother must be employed or in a training or retraining program or she faces being cut off social assistance; this in the face of inadequate although plentiful child care spaces and in the face of a 10 to 11 percent rate of unemployment. It fails to recognize that somebody has to care for children and that that is important work. It makes me crazy some days the way governments ignore the needs of children and the rights of children to be parented and to be nurtured. So instead of demanding that this mother - I can't imagine having a two year old, a four year old, a five year old, and a seven year old and being in the paid labour force full-time. I defy any person that hasn't had that kind of experience to even try to contemplate it, and any of us who might have had it certainly know how difficult, impossible it is. To force people into that kind of situation is just wrong and, I think, works against the well-being of society.

Part-time work with benefits, flextime, job sharing recognizes mothers' reality - the reality of the time and energy to care for children - makes it possible for women to have major economic independence even as they raise children, and lays the foundation for full economic independence as their children grow older. This reflects, then, a commitment to women's equality in real ways and in some ways addresses the issue of women and children's poverty. I think we must always recognize that children's poverty, which we hear a great deal about these days, coexists with women's poverty.

This motion and these initiatives may be of benefit to other people also: fathers who want to share in the parenting of children, something that we all would welcome. In addition, job flexibility, job sharing would allow people to upgrade or continue their education in our changing world with its dependence on changing technology and knowledge basis. We hear much about learning and education as a lifelong process. Initiatives like this would support workers in keeping up in their fields and being able to support themselves and to prepare for changes in the demands of their employment.

I believe that the suggestion for home-based employment in this time of rapid change in communication systems will provide employment opportunities for people who may otherwise be denied that employment. I think of disabled people who have difficulty getting around, of mothers of young children who want to be near their children, of parents of older children who want to keep an eye on them and whose children want to know that there's someone somewhere about. As we have heard, there can be advantages in terms of costs of parking, rental, office space, transit costs, transportation costs. We could even do something for the environment by not having all these people driving their cars, using gasoline, and putting exhaust into the air. Even in our inclement weather sometimes it's very difficult to get about, and people could continue to work at home. It's certainly a benefit to people in rural areas, who would be able to work in their homes and not have to be in the city.

I think we have to be vigilant in terms of abuse where payment for piecework might be too low and demands would be such that it would be unrealistic to earn a living wage in this way, but I think it offers real opportunities.

Although I welcome this motion, I think, however, that it must be supported by other initiatives in terms of on-site child care, after school care, respite care, and drop-in care.

I would again like to commend the member for raising the issue of people who are getting older, getting grayer, often women who have not worked for some period of time outside of the home. It's a wonderful way for them to get back into the paid labour force, through women starting businesses or working at home. We know that women start businesses and succeed in business at a higher rate than men do. I think an important thing to recognize, too, is that sometimes women who have been at home with children for a number of years don't have very good self-esteem and have little certainty about their abilities and the value that they can bring to the paid labour force. So this kind of an initiative provides them an opportunity to develop confidence in their skill and to build upon the well-honed skills that are developed in the home raising children. I believe that raising children develops skills that would stand you in good stead if you wanted to rule the world. All the skills are there that would ever be required at any paid work or employment. So I would say that I welcome this. I support it fully and hope that it can go forward.

Thank you.

#### 4:20

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: In the interests of gender balance, the Chair will recognize the Member for St. Paul, followed by Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MR. DROBOT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In rising in support of Motion 207 brought forward by the hon. Member for Three Hills, I would like to say that I believe the motion is very timely. Our changing society and advanced technology provide a great opportunity for creative work arrangements, perhaps one of the greatest advantages being able to work at home; for example, the

flexibility of it and opportunity to work at your own scheduling and your own speed. Working at home provides a balance of work schedules giving the worker an opportunity to pick their working hours. Because of the merits, more and more private companies are putting job sharing arrangements into place.

Mr. Speaker, I would touch briefly on the advantages of home-based employment for farm families. There are two types of employment for farm wives: one is operating a small business from the home, and the other is accepting part-time positions. Agricultural work is very seasonal, and in the Elk Point heavy oil area many young farm people are employed on a part-time basis. With home computers many of these farmers are doing contract work part-time. Farm wives are performing secretarial, accounting, and information-gathering data services for these oil companies at home. In the agricultural sector, in the privacy of their farm home, young farm women are working on newsletters, correspondence, taking messages, and doing secretarial duties. I know of a handicapped farmer doing accounting and filling out NISA and GRIP forms for farmers in his area from his wheelchair in the comfort of his farm home, while his young wife and son carry on the farm operation.

Mr. Speaker, the off-site employment opportunities are there and need to be encouraged. I know of a semiretired farm couple still living on the farm, and what a lot of talent and experience is being salvaged. They are doing secretarial sales work, typing, commercial promotional ads, and conducting public opinion polls from their armchairs. Today we have career persons who can be both mother to the child who needs a mother at home and still have a career with added income and fulfillment.

In the mid-1980s district home economists and the farm economics branch began programming in their extension work, pricing for profit, in farm women's conferences. The response was terrific. Publications and seminars were developed to meet the rising demands: upholstering, guest ranching, gift basketry, jewelry making, sewing gloves and vests, et cetera. Courses were conducted with many successful outcomes. Some of the articles produced have led to the development of craft shops and tremendous craft sales across the province. Often representatives from Economic Development and Trade participated in workshop discussions providing assistance in preparing a business plan and offering counseling services. Home-based businesses have become very busy businesses. The time is now right for additional efforts for other off-farm income opportunities performed from the home. I think Motion 207 addresses this philosophy.

Mr. Speaker, I've only addressed the agricultural sector in support of Motion 207. I leave it to my colleagues to deal with other sectors of employment. An article in *U.S. News & World Report* entitled Best Jobs for the Future listed five trends for the future. They refer to increases in technology, the aging population, a rise in foreign competition, a widening of the skills gap, and an ever increasing number of small business start-ups. Each of these trends has relevance to the home-based business and employment approach.

Farm families are not immune from decreased work time, although most have enough work to keep three persons busy. Mechanical advances mean that seeding, spraying, and harvesting are completed in a fraction of the time it took 20 years ago. Less hours of on-farm employment mean increased time to pursue other ventures including off-site job opportunities enhancing farm income. Fax machines, personal computers, electronic mail, telephone mail and mail boxes make it possible to carry on a business and perform services for almost any location having rapid contact with the rest of the world.

The only limit is imagination itself. Scientists predict that technology in the next hundred years will be a result of whatever

the human race is capable of imagining and doing. The majority of Alberta businesses, 97 percent, are firms that earn \$2 million or less in sales per year. The number of self-employed Canadians under the age of 25 increased by 53 percent between 1975 and 1985. On the home front the county of Parkland, for example, much like the rest of Alberta, has seen a steady increase of off-farm employment. Their figures show that 75 percent of the producers work 190 days per year at off-farm employment. It's on the rise partly because jobs are available and also because farming is expensive and farms are becoming expensive to operate. There's no doubt this trend will continue.

The reasons for home-based employment rising are interesting. A survey showed that flexible hours, the challenge of being in the work force, the ability to earn extra income, to be able to care for children at home, to provide a needed community service, health reasons, and not having to travel to work were all stated as results. What better reasons for supporting Motion 207? Home-based employment and home-based businesses have become one of the most significant reasons for support of rural economic development. The strength of our rural communities will grow if business development and home-based employment grow.

Mr. Speaker, the term "rural enterprise" includes two dimensions: structural autonomy and a degree of innovation. The creation of a new enterprise or new product serves to create a new market and utilize a technology in a rural environment. Examples of such innovation include the creation of new products by beef farmers and tack shops who are producing and selling warming blankets, trophy and saddle blankets to serve a new market. Country catering firms have been established. Country vacations, farm and country tours are now very popular. Hydroponic greenhouses have been developed and are making a mint. Why, the growth could be endless. Over 26 million men and women in North America, nearly one-quarter of the labour force, have shifted their jobs from the office to the home. In rural areas this is nothing new. The farm business with rare exceptions is run from the home. Diversification on the farm and non farm-based business are part of the larger trend with some of its unique features. We are in a period of tremendous and exciting change. With extension sales and techniques, changing this course will continue. Home-based employment is affecting the world we live in and the way we do business.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me say on behalf of those busy and enterprising farm wives:

The politician talks and talks  
Like an actor playing a part,  
The Mountie glitters on parade,  
While the salesman plies his art.  
The hunter follows his game  
Over the global ball,  
The pilot navigates his plane,  
While the farm housewife does it all.

The mechanic wields his shiny tools,  
The merchant shows his wares,  
The astronaut above the clouds  
A dizzy journey dares.  
But art and science soon would fade,  
And commerce dead would fall,  
If the farm wife stopped to cook and  
keep record books,  
For the farm wives do it all.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

4:30

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to have an opportunity to speak on this motion, and I want to thank the member for raising this most important matter. Several members have spoken to the changes in family life that we've seen over the last four or five decades, where families either desire or desperately need two incomes. We've seen many changes in our labour force, certainly changes in technology that will allow for different forms of communication so that people do not have to be on the same site in order to work together, which have advantaged in many ways handicapped people or homebound people. We've seen also the tragedy of rising unemployment and underemployment. There are many factors that make me very grateful for this kind of motion and hopeful that the government will pay close attention to it.

[Mr. Jonson in the Chair]

Mr. Speaker, I believe that both public and private employers must be encouraged to initiate opportunities that will provide flexibility in employment. This is one of the initiatives that needs to be considered for a happier, healthier, and more productive work force. In a recent Calgary workshop I understand that 70 percent of the participants indicated that their number one cause of stress is balancing family responsibility with their work life. This assessment was endorsed as well by the Falkenberg study done by the University of Calgary, which showed that people in the work force today have many, many roles to play. They're not only workers; they're parents, care givers, volunteers, and they have other interests to pursue. They desire above all a balance between their work and their private life.

Parents want to be home for their children. There's no function we perform that's more important than that of being a parent and perhaps is one that is more continuously undervalued in our day-to-day thinking. Parents want to have the opportunity to be a part of their children's childhood. They don't want to have to work all of the time. People also want to continue to learn. They want to take courses either to improve their own job possibilities or to explore their own interests. People want to make volunteer commitments. They want to coach teams; they want to do church and community work; they want to work for different agencies or groups in which they have an interest. People may have responsibilities towards aging parents or sick partners. They need time in order to take care of those responsibilities. Women in particular have desires to work for personal growth and fulfillment as well as for remuneration.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize that there are many different types of flexible work experience, which include some of the following. Flextime: these are hours of work available in the morning or at the end of the day aside from the core hours. Compressed workweek: some government departments in fact have this now; for instance, the Women's Secretariat of our own government. Seasonal hours: that's an accumulation of hours during the year that can be used at the employee's convenience. Job sharing: we've already heard some comments about this. My own impression is that the government has been rather slow in this initiative, particularly in management areas, but some of it is being done: part-time work, contract work, home-based work.

Mr. Speaker, flexibility and continuous education, learning new technologies, are the keys to retaining qualified workers, retaining workers who have received expensive training and are hard to replace, retaining workers who are happier and less worried about what's happening at home, and, finally, allowing workers to have

the opportunity for a broader work experience either because they might have to cover for other workers or because they'll be going to any number of different work environments.

Mr. Speaker, I heartily support work exchange programs and mentoring programs that give workers opportunities to test themselves and their skills in different ways as they move through their work and life experience. In addition to these personal advantages, there are other advantages. Offices and equipment can be shared and costs reduced when employees take turns at different times of the day, and part-time and flexible-time workers relieve the pressure of traffic in our urban areas, as has been spoken to.

Mr. Speaker, there's a growing trend towards home-based work, and certainly improved technology has provided for this. Blue Cross in our province is one of the pioneers in this regard. The advantages of home-based work include allowing for care of children at home, reducing the need for expensive office space, reducing the strain on transportation systems, saving of time when workers don't commute, benefiting the environment with less traffic and fewer offices, and, unquestionably, providing work for people who have difficulty with mobility: aging, handicapped, disabled people. I believe that home-based work, given the advantages of our technology and communications, is perhaps one of the major things we will see in the future.

Mr. Speaker, in reviewing this motion, I came across some interesting comments from a study done by the American Management Association. It's not contemporary. It is dated 1978, but I still believe it's valid. These are some of the conclusions that they have reached in describing their support for flexible working hours, or flextime. One of the conclusions is that for workers the fundamental feature of flexible working hours is a new freedom of choice and autonomy. Though not yet largely realized, flextime may also facilitate lifelong learning, since the new time management possibilities involved permit adult workers to take advantage of educational opportunities. It also offers benefits to employers, both the potentially higher productivity to be gained from more satisfied and more highly motivated workers and the prospect of using the flexible hours feature of jobs to attract people with very high level capabilities. It also expands the range of options for solving scheduling problems, meeting customer service needs. Finally, employment opportunities for several groups of people are improved, particularly women, men who wish a more balanced work and home life, handicapped, and aging.

Mr. Speaker, public and private organizations must overcome some of the negative aspects of flexible working arrangements, and I think this applies to the whole gamut of jobs. These problems must be addressed if the trend is going to be beneficial rather than detrimental. Some of these are that part-time workers are often paid less, even when one considers it as a proportion of a full-time worker. Since women are more likely to be part-time workers, it means households headed by women may and often are relegated to poverty. Part-time workers do not receive benefits and are not usually included in group pension plans; this increases the poverty of families dependent on part-time employment. Part-time workers don't usually have job security. Private and public institutions, which depend on a large number of poorly paid part-time and contract workers, are not as efficient because workers don't appear to be as loyal to the organization. When people are paid less for their part-time or contract work, they pay less income tax and their purchasing power is less, weakening the economy. Again, there is a tendency for less loyalty on the part of part-time workers.

Mr. Speaker, I think one of the changes that employers must make is that part-time, flexible-time, and contract workers must be paid reasonable wages. Consideration must be given to

providing benefits on a prorated basis, with more consideration for maternity and pension benefits. The traditional hours of work have to be relaxed; people should be able to negotiate when they work. Employers should not see part-time and contract workers as a source only of cheap labour and must provide either day care subsidies or on-site day care in the workplace. I think, again, that employers and employees should allow for diverse experiences within an organization. Again I stress the notion of mentoring and attempting to work in someone else's shoes. Employers should allow for leaves of absence within reason and make greater efforts to integrate part-time workers into the system by having them attend office meetings and other functions.

Mr. Speaker, there are, of course, positive and negative aspects of flextime. The positive aspects, as reported from all major industries – and this comes from an Alberta management survey on flextime – are as follows. It raises employees' morale. It reduces tardiness in 84 percent of cases. It eases employee commuting more than three-quarters of the time. It reduces absenteeism nearly three-quarters of the time. It makes recruiting easier in 65 percent of the cases. It reduces turnover in more than half the time and increases productivity for half the time.

#### 4:40

But flextime, Mr. Speaker, also has some negative effects that pose new challenges to management. For example, it increases the difficulty of the management job for approximately half the users, and it worsens internal communication in 38 percent of the cases. Other management aspects of flextime reflect mixed results. There are advantages about as often as there are problems, depending on the user.

Mr. Speaker, on balance, however, I don't think there's any question that there are more benefits than there are problems with flextime, that the pros certainly outweigh the cons. What must employees do? They must be reliable and responsible and have the ability to work on their own. If they're going to work at home, without supervision, I think they have to demonstrate that they have the capacity to do that. They may have to compromise on some benefits in order to accomplish this, and they must certainly be prepared and trained to work with new technologies and learn new skills.

A government on its part, Mr. Speaker, I believe must legitimize through legislation and regulations the capacity in government, in public and private institutions to allow for flextime. I believe it's incumbent on government to show leadership here, to introduce flextime and job sharing in government programs and show the way to private employers and to private and public institutions apart from government, show that this can produce a happier, healthier work force, can in fact provide for a more productive work force.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TANNAS: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for bringing the motion forward this afternoon. I've truly enjoyed the comments from the hon. members from both sides of the Assembly.

While I'm not really qualified to comment on the research of the hon. Member for Three Hills on HDL cholesterol, I could make some comments on her reference to the maturing process from a non Grecian Formula point of view. I'm delighted and I'm sure some of my colleagues who are afflicted are pleased that she didn't talk about the thinning process that also shows maturity. I feel compelled, however, to caution the hon. Member for Three Hills that her comments regarding the gender qualities and

characteristics that she ascribed to motor vehicle drivers were probably more humorous than they were factual.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I want to focus my comments primarily on the opportunities for off-site employment in my constituency of Highwood, which is located to the south of Calgary, or as we in Highwood like to say, Calgary is located to the north of us; it depends on your perspective. The opportunities for off-site employment for people in my constituency are exciting. They are an exciting prospect for many people, and even now they are a reality for a growing number of constituents who have nearness to a large centre of employment but can live and work in an area apart from that centre.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that our society is constantly changing. We've all marveled, indeed, at the speed at which our world has been transformed over the past several years. We've seen many countries and one large empire change from being ruled by what we might characterize as repressive regimes to being governed in some instances by free elections, not always an easy transition. Naturally, in some situations very chaotic conditions resulted and in some places still prevail. While observing this kind of change, we also have come to realize that those who are best able to handle change are those individuals who are ready to change themselves. Sometimes this change may be small and other times it may be quite large. That is painfully significant.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we have many traditional and customary procedures and processes that have been used in our Canadian society which we've inherited from other societies and have continued in our tradition and that meet our needs. However, I believe that some of these conventional processes, although very important, are cumbersome and in some ways almost enslaving. Those people who are most willing to change will likely be the most successful in a world such as we live in, that is characterized by change. For example, we can look at western European countries that have decided that their many historical traditions – and we might talk about their wars and perhaps their lack of trading with one another. Some of these traditions have caused their societies to suffer. Following the Second World War, many of those societies, many of those countries, decided to seek a new way. Their willingness to change, then, has in the last 40 years made them a powerful force in our global community.

As I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak and focus my comments on the off-site or home-based employment in the resolution. Motion 207 is in tune with the need to change. It is a refreshing motion that urges our government and the employers in our province to recognize the necessity of changing the way in which our provincial work force is treated. There's no doubt that in addition to the change we see happening in our world, our provincial work force is changing its habits, abilities, and needs. Motion 207 proposes that our government adapt to the changing factors in the province's work force. I support Motion 207 because it urges the government to encourage employers to consider new alternatives for their employees by initiating or supporting opportunities that promote flexibility in the workplace.

Mr. Speaker, it would seem that the background to Motion 207 is really quite simple and very logical. Traditionally, workers have had to be full-time, on-site in order to fulfill the responsibilities of their job. A full-time, on-site work force was absolutely necessary because there was no other possible way to complete a job in manufacturing or the extractive, primary-type industries. Because the on-site work force has been historically essential and justified, many individuals have been limited in the number and variety of job opportunities available to them. If a job opportunity arose that required the worker to be present at the job location, many individuals, including mothers, handicapped individuals –



potential workers – were not available. Those opportunities were not available to them. With the advent of computer technology and its increasing versatility, along with the evolution of such ideas as job sharing, many of the requirements of on-site job opportunities have been suspended. These would be particularly in the service industries, which, as we all know, are growing at a rather rapid pace.

#### 4:50

Technology now exists, Mr. Speaker, that can allow individuals to work in the convenience of their own home. Mothers and fathers who have previously been excluded from working in a well-paying, rewarding job because of a need to stay home and raise the children can now be allowed to work and develop a career. The same opportunities have been made available to handicapped individuals who might have difficulty with mobility and getting from their home to their worksite.

Telephones, fax machines, computers have opened up new horizons for off-site employment. To add to this potential, we have the face-to-face telephone conversation, with the assistance of television, that's now just beginning to come in. All are great possibilities. One only needs to look at the potential and the possibilities for single-parent families. Off-site employment is an exciting prospect.

In addition to the advanced technology, some employers have also discovered the advantages of allowing their employees to share their jobs. This has been referred to by a number of hon. members. This is particularly advantageous, then, to individuals who want or need to work but cannot commit to a full-time employment position.

Although the means by which employers can be flexible towards their employees now exist, many employers still operate under the mind-set of the on-site work force, and that mind-set is compelling them to have everyone in. I think hon. members only need to reflect about the bureaucratic tendencies to have everybody centralized to understand what we're trying to get at.

I'd like to give you, Mr. Speaker, some recent examples of employment flexibility. In government, for instance, in the public sector, policies relating to part-time and job-sharing arrangements have been in place since 1983. The Alberta government does promote some flexibility in employment, but I would suggest there's room for expansion. Job sharing and home-based work were two options that were included in the government's Balancing Work & Family survey. Initial studies by the government indicate that productivity, service, and morale are significantly improved since the institution of job-sharing work arrangements.

The matter of Blue Cross: I think another good example. Alberta Blue Cross has successfully implemented at-home employment. They began a pilot project in the dental claims department in 1989. It was expanded to the health services claims department in 1990. Currently Alberta Blue Cross has 16 off-site employees as well as approximately 200 people on the personnel department's waiting list who are interested in off-site positions once they become available. Blue Cross off-site employees have flexible work hours and can take advantage of tax deductions for operating a business from their home. From 1987 to 1990 Alberta Blue Cross grew from 262 employees to 466. The off-site processing program was an alternative to dealing with a lack of office space at the downtown Edmonton Blue Cross location. The Blue Cross program saves money. In their dental department the on-site processors process approximately 1,050 claims per week versus the record of the off-site processors, who average around 3,000 claims per week. With greater productivity and

lower overhead costs, Alberta Blue Cross saves approximately \$30,000 per off-site processor. That's a savings.

There are advantages to an employer who is flexible in the work force other than just saving money. What are these advantages? Well, I would like to cite five advantages to the employer. An employer can save on current or additional office space. An employer can secure and/or retain desirable employees. An employer can save on relocation and retraining costs. An employer can have more opportunity to recruit mature – and we refer again to the hon. Member for Three Hills and that discussion – and reliable employees, whose specialized skills may be unavailable for full-time, on-site positions. Fifthly, an employer can lower personnel costs because overtime for full-time employees can thereby be reduced.

Mr. Speaker, there are also clear advantages to the employee. I'd like to allow equal time to the employee, and I'll cite five advantages that occur to me. An employee can set his or her own time and hours of work, obviously a great advantage to someone who is doing some parenting at home. An employee can reduce the time and cost of commuting and the mental anguish that goes with driving, which was also referenced by the hon. member.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's those women drivers.

MR. TANNAS: Exactly.

You can allow for an integration of work and family responsibilities to thus strengthen the family, and the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar referred to this most important role of parenting, the key to the success of our society. Fourthly, an employee can have the flexibility to pursue other or further career, educational, volunteer, or leisure interests in addition to the family interests. Finally, an employee working at home can eliminate the cost of day care, of after school care, of wardrobes, uniforms, transportation, parking costs, and the like.

Mr. Speaker, there are many advantages, then, to both employee and employer of off-site work. Individuals who are willing to meet the challenge of change by allowing themselves to change are the individuals who will be most competitive in our changing world. Motion 207 challenges all Albertans to be willing to change their approach to employment in our province. It allows them to at least look at their approach to employment. The directions of Motion 207 can work and would be very advantageous to the health of our province, both economically and socially. Therefore, I support Motion 207.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton-Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Mr. Speaker, just a few comments. The minister has brought forward a good resolution, and there's been some excellent debate on it. I particularly enjoyed the comments of herself and my colleague and some of the others in the Assembly on this topic. I just wanted to add a few comments, and then certainly we'll pass it on to somebody else or perhaps let it come to a vote, which would be very nice, to see it passed.

The motion suggests that the government should encourage public and private employers to be more flexible in their employment practices in matters such as job sharing and home-based employment. Of course, one could think of other flexible procedures and policies that employers might have as well. I would have just one question for the mover of the motion: perhaps she could have fleshed out a little bit some of the ways in

which companies could be encouraged to do this. I'm not sure if she's actually suggesting that there should be government money put into companies to help them with this process, if indeed it would cost money. I remember, actually, a friend of mine that runs a small company. He hires quite a number of part-time people, and he maintains that he gets about five or six hours of work for four hours of pay from his employees because they come in so fresh and enthusiastic and work so hard while they're there. So he thinks that it's a great idea.

I think there are, though, certain considerations that one should think about in terms of suggesting more job sharing. One of the things that we see with a lot of employers is that they like to put people on part-time so they don't have to pay them benefits. That, of course, isn't going to help very much for the single moms and the people that want to work only part-time to try to improve their living conditions. Certainly the wage would help, but it does mean that they still are disadvantaged in many ways compared to people who work full-time. I suggest that the government should very seriously look at their labour laws and consider building into it sort of prorated benefits for people that work part-time.

**5:00**

We've seen a situation exist in this province for a long time now, and this government has done nothing about it, where often companies – and it's common for department stores to do it – will hire women in their 40s or 50s, who have raised their families, put them on part-time pay, and then work them up to as much as 37 hours a week and call this part-time because somehow it isn't 44 or 40 hours or something that is the requirement to demand that they be called full-time and be given benefits. That kind of situation still exists, and this government has tolerated that for many years; for 20 years they've been in power. Then we have this nice statement saying wouldn't it be nice if we encouraged more part-time. But it's at a cost to some people and, of course, to the benefit of some corporations that take advantage of it if we allow it to exist on that plane on which it presently exists.

The working at home idea is one that has been going on for quite some time now both in Canada and the United States, particularly in the States. Of course, it is ideally suited to some of the new technologies, particularly in the communications industries, the high-tech industries – data processing and collection and analysis – and the entertainment industries. Of course, in that sense the idea is a good one for the '90s, as my colleague said earlier about this motion. It does encourage and take notice of the directions our economies are going.

We've had a lot of nice words about what a good idea this is and how we should encourage it. Like I said, we could stand to have some closer look at how you go about encouraging it, who's going to do it, who's going to benefit, why, how, where, when. Are there going to be some rules to make sure that the employer and the employee are both being treated fairly in the process? I guess one of the things that worries me is that the conversation about this motion today has not really dealt with the context within which we're talking, only just to sort of say, you know, the modern day and the '90s, that these are some policies and some good ideas for the '90s.

The fact is that the '90s are a rather harsh economic time. The '80s was a boom period, but unfortunately in that boom period almost all of the wealth that was generated, an incredible increase in the gross national product in this country during most of the '80s, went into the hands of a few very rich people at the top and the top maybe 30 percent of the real working population of this country. The middle-income group did not benefit much from it. In fact, what they've seen is more and more taxes and more and

more pressure on them to lower their wages, and in fact many of them have been pushed out of those jobs where they had a certain amount of benefits – a certain amount of security, pensions, that sort of thing – and hired back on contract labour, perhaps on part-time with no benefits and no security and a minimum wage. Now about a third of our population is living in poverty. Over the last 10 or 15 years, when the supply-siders have been in control of our North American society, we have seen a much more vicious society develop.

Unfortunately, this government and the federal government have bought into this globalized trading patterns and globalized competition, and we're not in control of our own economy anymore in this country. We're the most foreign-owned country in the world already, and many of the big corporations are now pushing the free trade deal and the North American free trade deal. More and more of the control over what's happening in our society is being taken outside our country and outside the control of the people that in many cases should be making the decisions about what kind of society they want to have, what kind of rules and workplace rules they want to have. We're going to be rather severely limited. The North American free trade deal is not just about 1 percent of our trade; make no mistake. We made a trade deal with the United States that affects almost all of our trade, and the Mexico/United States/Canada trade deal is now a chance for the United States to use that deal to get some of the things they didn't bully us into last time around. We are going to be in a lot of trouble when it comes to trying to . . .

#### **Speaker's Ruling Relevance**

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, hon. member, please. The Chair would like to respectfully request that you direct your remarks back to the motion before the Assembly.

MR. McEACHERN: The motion is, Mr. Speaker:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly . . .

I guess the government has the majority of the seats in this Assembly.

. . . encourage public- and private-sector employers to initiate opportunities that promote flexibility in employment, such as job sharing and home-based employment.

Okay, I agree with it. I'm not going to talk a long time on it. I was just trying to point out that it's very hard to do that if you're not in control of your own economy. Those topics I will get into in more detail on another, perhaps more appropriate, day, on Economic Development and Trade if you like. But they're certainly relevant to the '90s and the kind of society that we're building, that this motion is brought into the context of the '90s and the kind of society, the kind of economy we have. I think it was quite relevant, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Debate Continued**

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche.

MR. CARDINAL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today also to support Motion 207. This motion urges the government to encourage employers to consider new, innovative, and alternative ways of creating flexibility in the workplace. Flexibility in the workplace has been around for many years in northern Alberta, sometimes not by choice, but other times by choice. In order to maintain a good standard of living, in some parts of our province people hold sometimes up to four different jobs through the year. People may trap part-time, people may do commercial fishing

part-time, and people may guide, work in the sawmills part-time, and possibly farm or truck part-time. So the issue of flexibility in the workplace, which Motion 207 urges, is already in place in some parts of our province and is no doubt an issue that needs to be encouraged and promoted.

In fact, in relation to the province, I know for a fact that in the area I come from, north of Athabasca, between the mid-1950s and 1960 the forestry department of the provincial government already had flexibility in the workplace. Again, sometimes this was not by choice but because of other reasons. The unemployment was so high in that particular part of the province that there were never enough jobs for all the people that wanted to work, so when the government had jobs out there, they would allocate sometimes one job for a family. There were never any specific regulations or rules as to what member of the family would have to take the job. At times, I personally was involved in it, where my father would work the first month of a three-month job. Then he would come home, and I would go to work for another month, and when I was done with that month, one of my other brothers would go to work for the balance of the other month to finish off the three-month job.

So our governments have been involved to some degree in job sharing and flexibility in the workplace. Even private employers at their own choice, I know, working with some of the lumber companies in northern Alberta, had flexibility in the workplace. They allowed rotation of family members to hold jobs while operating on a seasonal basis. The family members were allowed to work one day a week if they wanted, or two days a week if they wanted, as long as they had another friend or a community member to replace them for the balance of the term of the job. What that would allow them to do was go out and look after their trap lines or do a bit of guiding or some other projects they may have had going. So the process is around and has been around for quite a long time.

#### 5:10

You look at the native family at home, for example. My mother still does native handicrafts. She works at her own pace; she works her own hours. She can start at 8 in the morning if she wants and finish at 10, or she can start at 8 o'clock in the evening and finish at 10 o'clock in the evening, doing native handicrafts: making moccasins, beadwork, jackets. No transportation required, no additional facilities, no office space, yet it's a real advantage for the taxpayer, the public, and the family also.

Mr. Speaker, Motion 207 is innovative. It will create a lot of new jobs. This motion would allow more than one person to share a job. I know there are people out there who go out and work and hold down a full-time job but do not want the full-time job. They don't need the money in a lot of cases, and I know this personally. A lot of people go to work and hold down a job for socialization. I know that if the opportunity were provided, these people would be happy to take one-third of that job or one-half of that job, and I think Motion 207 would definitely allow that.

Motion 207 also addresses issues that I am personally interested in. Mr. Speaker, in 1991 I introduced Motion 201 to urge our government to co-ordinate services between Family and Social Services, Career Development and Employment, and Employment and Immigration to do a joint delivery of employment- and training-related programs. We had a pilot project operating in Athabasca where these three departments co-ordinated services, and within three or four months of operation they had placed over a hundred unemployed or underemployed people in either full-time or part-time job sharing with other people. They also placed over 40 people in training programs and came into contact with

1,800 unemployed or underemployed people. So these processes definitely work, and they are very close to what Motion 207 encourages.

One of the problems we ran into with those pilot projects was that there were never enough permanent jobs to fill all the unemployed and underemployed people's needs. If it moves forward, I know Motion 207 will open up a lot more jobs in our area because I can see a lot more people saying, well, I'm only going to work one-third or one-half of the job. This will allow the other person that's unemployed or underemployed to have the rest of that job. I know we will move forward with that.

Mr. Speaker, this year I'm also moving Motion 240, which I've introduced. It is quite similar to Motion 207. If we move forward with both motions 207 and 240, Motion 240 would allow the government, under Family and Social Services' supports for independence, which has a \$950 million budget for employment training and so on - if we can redirect these dollars and channel them through municipalities, agencies, and organizations to employ these people either through flextime or full-time, I know we can place thousands of people out there tomorrow, if these projects would move forward. I know it would be positive for the taxpayers. I know it would be positive for the people that are underemployed and unemployed because I have never heard of one person that's on welfare saying that they love being on welfare. People want to get off, and I think both of these motions would allow that to happen. Therefore, I definitely will support this motion.

Motion 207 even applies to larger projects, projects like Alberta-Pacific, for example. Alberta-Pacific has agreed to allow some flexibility in some of the jobs on their project. We're talking about thousands of jobs with that particular project, close to 2,800 jobs during construction alone. I know some of the people in my constituency work at Alberta-Pacific right now, but it's not their only job. They're sharing it with other people, and they're either farming at the same time or trapping or commercial fishing while they are working on these projects. I can go on. Even in the forestry industry Alberta-Pacific, for example, will have 660 permanent jobs in the woodlands operation.

Again, if these jobs are designed properly, if our government goes into proper negotiations with a private company and the people out there are interested in sharing jobs with other Albertans or Canadians, then I know that the company will go along. We will be able to employ more people. Instead of creating only the jobs mentioned with the Alberta-Pacific project, if we handled it properly, we could probably create twice as many jobs. A spin-off alone will create five times what will be created at the site at Alberta-Pacific. The spin-off jobs definitely could be the jobs that could be handled through Motion 207.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to say that Motion 207 challenges Albertans to be willing to change their approaches to employment in our province and, in turn, open up much needed jobs for people that are unemployed and underemployed now.

Thank you.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: May the hon. member close the debate on the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oh, I'm sorry. The hon. Minister of Advanced Education.

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, I simply want to say with regard to Motion 207 that I've known the hon. Member for Three Hills for

some 12 years, and it's no surprise to me that the member comes forward with a very commonsense, meaningful resolution in this House. Of the 83 motions other than government motions on today's Order Paper, it's one of just very few that is urging the Assembly, as opposed to the government, to do something. Day after day after day – and I say this as a member of government – we continue to hear people ask the government to do things. One of the great uniquenesses of Motion 207 from the hon. Member for Three Hills is that she's urging the Assembly to do something. I think this is particularly significant because there are 2 and a half million Albertans of all ages out there who look to this Assembly for leadership, and this is a classic example of a member coming forward, urging not political parties, urging not the government, but urging all members of this Assembly to endorse a very worthwhile exercise.

Therefore, I would endorse what the hon. Member for Three Hills is proposing.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Three Hills, to close debate.

5:20

MRS. OSTERMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I really appreciate the last intervention by the hon. Minister of Advanced Education. In fact, in response to one of the members who rose and was somewhat negative: while it's important to raise concerns with respect to any motion, I think it's important to talk about how we're going to go about getting at something without throwing up our hands before we've even started and raising all the concerns. One has to make a first step.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

First of all, I would say to all hon. members who spoke this afternoon that I very much appreciated their comments. They were very helpful, very positive in terms of the aspects of what it is that could be begun, because, Mr. Speaker, we are, in fact, talking only about a beginning. If we had the answers, surely they all would have been done. They'd have been done out there, everywhere. As the hon. Minister of Advanced Education has said, should this Assembly adopt the motion, I sincerely hope that hon. members aren't going to be asking the government: what are you going to do? Certainly there's part of it that is the government's responsibility – and I have spoken about that this afternoon – in terms of the public service, but all of us carrying ourselves physically and mentally throughout this province can talk about what it is that can occur and what the potentials are.

Mr. Speaker, I do have to make a couple of observations about comments made by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway. As always, he engenders some discussion and other things that might be thought about in this Assembly but not carried out. He did talk about one area that was very important, one that must not be overlooked or forgotten, and that is the prorating of benefits. We're not looking to disenfranchise people in this province from benefits that I think should aptly flow, for instance, with job sharing, which some people call part-time employment. In fact, I believe we're talking about job sharing which is somewhat different.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Kingsway also talked about bad employers in the sense that this or that could happen. Well, Mr. Speaker, this afternoon what I'm talking about are people,

Albertans, with the best of motives. If we're going to start believing people have bad motives, then I guess we can't really accomplish anything. I believe there are good employers in this province. I know there are good employers in this province. I choose to focus on them, not the bad employers. I choose to focus on good workers who are looking to be productive, looking to be innovative, looking to do more with less, which all of us must do. I think we should concentrate on the positive.

When it comes to talking about the potential for trade impacting on this, Mr. Speaker, we could get into a discussion about the economy, because this is obviously closely aligned, but I cannot imagine in my wildest dreams how an hon. member can talk about not trading with another country, not trading with a Third World country, because it may lower our standard of living. How on earth are these countries ever to rise from where they're at unless we participate with them? I mean, what are we saying? Are we going to say to our native community, that the hon. Member for Athabasca-Lac La Biche speaks so eloquently of, that we can't do business with them because maybe a group of them have a lower standard of living and sometime, somehow it's going to pull us all down? I mean, I hope we get real in this Assembly and recognize the opportunities that trading with other countries presents to us and view it in a positive light.

Mr. Speaker, in a sense, if we want to have the ability to distribute to the less fortunate of our society who may temporarily need our assistance, we must have a full working economy with all those wishing to be productive, wishing to lend a hand, wishing to earn a salary or run a productive business – not necessarily to pay taxes, but they know that's the result of it. Those taxes we choose to redistribute in certain ways to help people. If we're going to be able to do that, we have to have a strong, functioning economy. I believe that this in fact will lend itself, should we choose to pursue it again with vision and vigour, with all haste.

I thank all hon. members for their support. I would ask for the acceptance of Motion 207, to be voted for in a positive sense, standing in my name on the Order Paper. Thank you.

[Motion carried]

MR. GOGO: Mr. Speaker, the business of this evening will be a continuation of the estimates, tonight dealing with the Department of Agriculture.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No, not Agriculture. FIGA.

MR. GOGO: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. I stand corrected. The Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, in deference to the Member for Vegreville.

Mr. Speaker, I move that when members reassemble this evening at 8, they do so in Committee of Supply.

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion, those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. The motion carries.

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:27 p.m.]